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How to prove success with social media metrics

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Still working on your budget for 2013? As you debate over how much green to throw at various marketing initiatives, direct mail, trade shows, online advertising, social media etc. its best to figure out your ROI first before asking your boss for extra money to buy that new color copier.

We all know management like to see numbers, graphs and multi-colored pie charts but honestly, "marketing" is something that is extremely tough to measure especially given our industry, retail real estate. It's even harder to measure when talking about social media. I wish I had the golden ticket answer for you, I don't. Mostly because there isn't one simple answer, marketing has to be measured over time. Because there are traditionally numerous touch-points before a lease is signed including research, website visits, hearing testimonials, doing site tours, signing an LOI etc. it's hard to say a deal was done due to one method.

Measuring social media in likes, tweets, clicks, impressions and pins is information you should have and can quickly find simply by viewing your own social media dashboards. However, what you want to pay more attention to is engagement, loyalty, audience, influence and action.

Engagement measures the interest level of your brand's message. Are people talking about your brand online? Have you gotten adequate engagement in return from the media? When you are at networking events do people know what your company is up to? Are they opening your email blasts and clicking links? Get social and be sure that you are also writing back, tweeting and commenting on other's posts. Getting a dialogue going, even something on this small scale is important and it will help.

Loyalty measures intensity. Are people commenting on your blog posts? How many comments? Are they negative or positive? Long or short? Are the majority of your website visitors returning or new? Are the same people commenting over and over? Noticing these factors will help you learn who your biggest supporters are.

Audience. Hopefully you know who you're marketing to. However, who are you actually appealing to? Check out your Google Analytics to see where people are coming from (mobile devices ie. iPods, iPads, smart phones). You can also view where geographically people are coming from all the way down to town. Check your Facebook Insights too. The Insights provide an overview of your audience broken down by gender, age, city and let you know which topics your audience is most interested in by reviewing the virality of each post.

Next, measure how involved your audience is with your company. What is the average time someone spends on your site? Who are your repeat clients? How many times have you seen a desired outcome from a recent marketing campaign you launched?

As always, thanks for reading. Happy holidays and hope to connect via social in 2013! @DiPodaski.

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